

THE CD LONGBOX: ENVIRONMENTAL IDIOCY? SAVVY MARKETING? BOTH?

T O W E R R E C O R D S

# PULSE!

AUGUST 1990

## Steve Earle

COUNTRY TO ROCK  
THE HARD WAY.

## The Pretenders

ONE-WOMAN BAND?

## John Doe

REVELING IN ANONYMITY

Earl King

Foster & Lloyd

Anne-Sophie Mutter

Danzig

Spanic Boys

The Lightning Seeds

Roy Hargrove

The Deighton Family

Consolidated

Pussy Galore

Marty Ehrlich



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by Jill Furmanovsky

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Cover photograph by Tony Motram



# Horror Business

By the end of the '80s, much of the country's limited attention span focused on the twin excesses of heavy metal bands and international big business. Save for the political themes of a few groups—namely Metallica, Megadeth and their thrash progeny—the two camps rarely met.

Come 1990, both metal and the Market are paying the toll for a decade's indulgences. And while politicians are busy holding the hands of former free-market posterboys, their wives in the PMRC—tired of leather and spandex—have turned their jaded gaze from metal's supposed suicide-mongering to rap's supposed promiscuity-mongering. And the listening public has followed, making 2 Live Crew the W.A.S.P. of its generation.

Having succumbed to the cartoon excess of their images, the metal casualties are as easily counted as their highly leveraged counterparts. Most of the '80s' biggest have made their way through one of Betty Ford's detox franchises: Mötley Crüe, Van Halen, Guns N' Roses and Megadeth's Dave Mustaine among them. Mustaine and Alice Cooper have traded in for a more insidious demon, Top 40 songwriting partner Desmond Child. Metallica turned in perhaps the weakest (though best-selling) album of its career and toured with a giant, prone-to-topple statue of blind Justice. And elder spokesman Bruce Dickinson has led off his post-Iron Maiden solo debut, *Tattooed Millionaire*, with the awkwardly expletiveless "Son of a Gun." The genre is not at its artistic high, but it's still big business, and most of the pie belongs to prettyboys like Skid Row and White Lion and their less-pretty comrades in Warrant, Poison and Great White.

Unless Glenn Danzig has anything to say about it. He's weathered the metal years by investing heavily in the genre's riskiest commodity, Satanism. There's no "dark side" to Danzig's music; it's all dark (choice titles over the years: "All Murder, All Guts," "Horror Business," "Soul on Fire," "Evil Thing").

And for better and worse publicity-wise, Danzig has avoided the scrutiny of the PMRC ("the Inquisition," as he puts it) in the most surprising manner: by taking himself very seriously. (Often to point of caricature: For example, the new CD's art unfolds into an upside-down cross.) Danzig is capable of the kind of detailed filibuster with which "moral" groups want to avoid direct confrontation. His goal, he claims, is nothing less than reclaiming the confused image of evil from the good/bad dichotomy politicians and moralists purvey: "I think it's a political thing. I mean, churches and governments use evil to get money together when they have campaign drives—especially churches. To me, the Church is probably the most evil thing, the most corrupt thing, and the government also. Most people feel very apathetic about government, because they feel ineffective to do anything against the government, even when in big numbers—it's still kind of like hitting a spoon against a brick wall."

Frequently a moral opera played in Saturday-morning-cartoon proportions, it still makes for some great music. The new album, *Danzig II: Lucifuge*, the second from his self-named group, testifies to the rich, but by no means seamless, tapestry of dark images he has woven over the past decade-plus—a tortured demon at its center.

Back in the late '70s, a band called the Misfits brought

B-movie gore and a charismatic's attitude to punk rock: horrorcore. Glenn Danzig was the lead singer and songwriter for the Misfits, and he filled their albums with eccentric punk that sounded oddly like '50s rock'n'roll when you could filter out the heavy-static guitars. Today he says, "I never understood why we were put under hardcore, except the fact that maybe we were just a noncompromising, loud and very aggressive band."

Danzig followed up the Misfits' demise with a short-lived project named for the Celtic prototype of Halloween, Samhain. He carried Samhain's block calligraphy and skull logo over to his latest band's debut, but the 1988 *Danzig* had little in common with the music he sang 10 years ago.



DANZIG (L-R): EERIE VON, GLENN DANZIG, CHUCK BISCUITS AND JOHN CHRIST

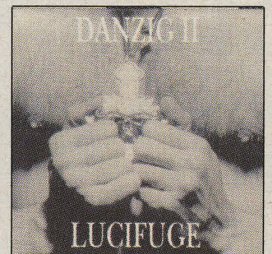
The '50s influence remained, but gone was the mayhem—an aural space filled with an emphasis on Danzig's crooning; he's equipped with a voluminous low range, and a knack for writing dramatic songs which can best be defined the way he praises idol Roy Orbison: "Here's a guy who doesn't rely on hooks and this and that; when the song is over it's over. It's very dramatic stuff, fucking great."

Danzig the band was formed about the time Def American head Rick Rubin was assembling the soundtrack to *Less Than Zero*, for which Danzig ultimately wrote "Life Fades Away" for Orbison to perform. The late singer's influence is strongly felt on the first Danzig album during songs about desperate (albeit demonic) loneliness such as "Twist of Cain" and "Am I Demon."

Like *Danzig*, the new album has its most obvious affinities with the spare form of AC/DC's hits and the mood set by the Doors and Black Sabbath's early albums. The confusing thing is that bands like Sabbath and AC/DC would seem exactly the music that the punk "movement" reacted against. *Lucifuge*—literally "fleeing from light," one of Danzig's favorite images and one which he handles deftly—wanders even further back, to the acoustic-blues roots of early metal. Danzig teams 'core veterans (longtime companion Eerie Von on bass; Black Flag and Circle Jerks vet Chuck Biscuits on drums; John Christ on guitar) but slows the pace to melodramatic effect. "Instead of just relying on thrash music," Danzig says, "which anybody can do, and isn't very powerful—if you place it at the right spot at the right time, then yes, but if it's just done over and over again, then it's just . . . it becomes very patronizing the way a lot of bands use it. And it's just not what I'm really about." ■

Glenn Danzig takes  
a conservative path to  
'90s stardom

BY MARC WEIDENBAUM



#### Selected Glenn Danzig Discography

**With Danzig:**  
*Danzig II: Lucifuge* (Def American, 1990).  
*Danzig* (Def American, 1988).

**With Samhain:**  
*Initium* (Plan 9).  
*November Coming Fire* (Plan 9).  
*Unholy Passion* (Plan 9).

**With the Misfits:**  
*Walk Among Us* (Slash).  
*Misfits* (compilation, Plan 9).  
*Evilive* (guest Henry Rollins, Plan 9).  
*Legacy of Brutality* (Plan 9).  
*Earth A.D.* (Plan 9).  
*Die, Die My Darling EP* (Plan 9).

Marc Weidenbaum is Assistant Editor at Pulse! Paul is dead.